

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces *June 15, 2009*

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about global deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat. This supplemental report covers ongoing U.S. contingency operations overseas.

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, and has deployed various combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those and other overseas operations. These operations and deployments remain ongoing and were previously reported consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution.

In response to the terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures, as necessary, in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous international partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qa'ida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qa'ida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous international partners, brought an end to the Taliban regime. Our forces are actively pursuing and engaging remaining al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 58,000, of which approximately

20,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently for a 12-month period from October 13, 2008, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1833 of September 22, 2008. The mission of ISAF, under NATO command, is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows for continued reconstruction and the exercise and extension of Afghan authority. Presently, 40 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 28 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped forces deployed since January 2002 to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations, continue to conduct secure detention operations for those detained at Guantanamo Bay under Public Law 107–40 and consistent with the law of war.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq, under unified command, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 of December 18, 2007; the authorization was not renewed in 2009. Since the expiration of the authorization and mandate for the MNF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 on December 31, 2008, U.S. forces have continued operations to support Iraq in its efforts to maintain security and stability in Iraq pursuant to the bilateral Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during

Their Temporary Presence in Iraq, which entered into force on January 1, 2009. These contributions have included, but have not been limited to, assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces, supporting the development of Iraq's political institutions, improving local governance, enhancing ministerial capacity, and providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis. The U.S. contribution of forces to the Iraq mission fluctuates over time, depending on the conditions in theater as determined by the commanders on the ground; the present U.S. contribution is approximately 138,000 U.S. military personnel.

In furtherance of U.S. efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends, its allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commands. These maritime operations are aimed at stopping the movement, arming, and financing of international terrorists.

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and Serbia (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international police, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment that facilitates the work of the European Union (EU)-led International Civilian

Office and the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX).

Currently, 25 NATO nations contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is about 1,400 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 10 percent of the total strength of approximately 13,700 personnel.

The U.S. forces participating in KFOR have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo but also have operated in other areas of the country based on mission requirements. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, helping to maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement remain the principal military tasks. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement, and coordinates with and supports EULEX, within its means and capabilities. The KFOR provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, to protect all segments of Kosovo's population, and to help instill a feeling of confidence across all ethnic communities throughout Kosovo.

NATO periodically conducts formal reviews of KFOR's mission. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, and recommendations for adjustments to KFOR's force structure and eventual withdrawal. NATO adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans.

The Kosovo Police (KP) has primary responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The EULEX monitors, mentors, and advises the KP and possesses limited executive authority. The KP provides the first line of riot response, to be followed by EULEX's specialized anti-riot police (Formed Police Units or FPU's). The KFOR also offers as-needed security assistance in response to civil unrest. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as events on the ground dictate.

In January 2009, the Government of Kosovo established the Kosovo Security Force (KSF)

and began the process of dissolving the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The KSF is a lightly armed, civilian-led security force that provides crisis response, explosive ordnance disposal, and civil protection. The newly formed Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force provides civilian oversight and control for the KSF. The KFOR provides technical and policy guidance to the KSF and assists with recruiting for new members, chairing selection boards that identify former KPC members to join the KSF, supervising NATO-standard training programs for new recruits, and coordinating KSF equipment purchases and donations.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursu-

ant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16.

The President's News Conference With President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea

June 16, 2009

President Obama. Good morning, everybody. President Lee, on behalf of the American people, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Washington. *Hwan yong hamnida.*

President Lee. Thank you.

President Obama. I'm looking forward to continuing our conversation over lunch, and I know that First Lady Michelle Obama is very much delighted to host your wife today as well.

The Republic of Korea is one of America's closest allies. Our friendship has been forged through a history of shared sacrifice, and it is anchored in our shared democratic values. And, Mr. President, I'm pleased that the friendship between our countries has only grown stronger under your leadership.

We meet at a time of great challenges. On the Korean Peninsula, North Korea has abandoned its own commitments and violated international law. Its nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave threat to peace and security of Asia and to the world. In the face of these threats and provocations, the people of the Republic of Korea have shown a steadiness and a resolve that has earned the respect of the United States and of the world.

Today President Lee and I reiterated our shared commitment to the complete denuclear-

ization of the Korean Peninsula. We have reaffirmed the endurance of our alliance and America's commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea. And we discussed the measures that we are taking with our partners in the region, including Russia, China, and Japan, to make it clear to North Korea that it will not find security or respect through threats and illegal weapons.

That united international front has been on full display since North Korea's ballistic missile test in April and was further galvanized by its recent nuclear test. On Friday the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that called for strong steps to block North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Now we must pursue a sustained and robust effort to implement this resolution together with our international partners. And in addition to the Korean Peninsula, we are committed to a global effort to pursue the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, an effort that I will be discussing later this summer in Moscow and at the G-8.

So I want to be clear that there is another path available to North Korea, a path that leads to peace and economic opportunity for the people of North Korea, including full integration